

TREASURE

OUR

virginia

COASTS

and

ESTUARIES

miles of coastline
3,315

coastal population in 2000
4,440,709

fy03 czma core (section 306)
funding
\$2,000,000

fy03 czma enhancement
(section 309) funding
\$540,000

fy03 coastal nonpoint
implementation
\$525,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve operations, education,
monitoring and stewardship
\$555,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve land acquisition/
construction
\$438,000



VIRGINIA'S DIVERSE COASTAL ZONE RANGES FROM THE CHESAPEAKE BAY TO THE ATLANTIC COAST TO THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP. MAJOR INDUSTRIES THAT DEPEND ON VIRGINIA'S COASTAL AREAS INCLUDE RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE, TOURISM, AND CARGO TRADE. RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND RESULTING RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLACE COMPETING DEMANDS ON THE COMMONWEALTH'S NATURAL RESOURCES. THE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT (CZMA) PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF VIRGINIA'S COASTAL AREAS. THIS LAW, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA), RECOGNIZES A NATIONAL INTEREST IN OUR COASTAL AND OCEAN AREAS. IT ALLOWS STATES AND TERRITORIES, NOT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO BALANCE CONSERVATION OF THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT WITH HUMAN USES THAT DEPEND ON COASTAL RESOURCES.

THE CZMA IN VIRGINIA

The CZMA establishes two programs to balance the use and protection of America's coasts. The Coastal Management Program gives states a flexible framework to address a broad range of community development, economic, and natural resource issues at the state and local level. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System protects key coastal areas for long-term scientific study, education, and resource stewardship.

Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program

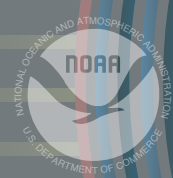
Approved: 1986

Lead Agency: Department of Environmental Quality

Virginia's Coastal Program links state agencies and programs that manage diverse coastal resources along the Chesapeake Bay; the Atlantic Ocean; the Rappahannock, York, and James rivers; and portions of the tidal Potomac River. Key issues for the commonwealth include restoration of the oyster fishery, water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, and management of a growing aquaculture industry.

Accomplishments of the Virginia Coastal Program include:

- *becoming the sixth state to receive full approval of its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program to address runoff pollution from such sources as agricultural operations, septic systems, storm water, and marinas.*



- *launching a voluntary Clean Marinas Initiative in partnership with local governments and recreational boaters to help reduce pollution from marina and boat operations.*
- *establishing the Virginia Oyster Heritage Program to help rebuild native oyster populations in the Chesapeake. The program is constructing broodstock sanctuary reefs; creating harvest enhancement areas; monitoring reef habitat, water quality and oyster populations; and providing educational materials on oyster restoration. The program served as a catalyst for a Baywide commitment to increase native oyster populations by tenfold by 2010.*
- *initiating studies and inventories on the Commonwealth's nontidal wetlands, that led to new authorities for managing, monitoring and granting permits for nontidal wetlands.*
- *establishing the Virginia Seaside Heritage Program, a public-private partnership program aimed at restoration, use-conflict resolution, and protection of the aquatic resources of Virginia's Delmarva Peninsula. The Virginia Seaside Heritage Program will build on the momentum of very recent restoration success and develop the tools necessary to support long-term restoration and management strategies on the seaside. This area holds tremendous potential to demonstrate appropriate management of economic development and habitat restoration within a rare and fragile ecosystem.*

Virginia's National Estuarine Research Reserve

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve-Virginia

Designation: 1991

Lead Agency: Virginia Institute of Marine Science-College of William and Mary

The Chesapeake Bay Reserve in Virginia is part of a national network of coastal protected areas that provides sciences and education to coastal resource managers. The reserve system is a partnership between NOAA and the states. The Chesapeake Bay-VA National Estuarine Research Reserve has four components within the York River basin—Goodwin Islands, Catlett Islands, Taskinas Creek, and Sweet Hall Marsh. Incorporating 4,435 acres of lands and waters, the reserve protects a high diversity of habitats, including bottomland swamps, tidal freshwater wetlands, saltmarshes, eelgrass beds, and oyster reefs along the broad salinity regime of the York River and Mobjack Bay system.

RESEARCH: In addition to scientists from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, which is the largest marine institute in the United States focused on coastal ocean and estuarine science, the reserve hosts researchers from a variety of state and federal agencies, academic institutions, and private consulting firms. Typically there are over 25 research projects conducted on an annual basis within the reserves boundaries.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: In addition to a field education program that provides hands-on, meaningful Bay experiences to a wide variety of student, teacher, and general public audiences, reserve staff conduct targeted trainings for decisionmakers on coastal management issues affecting estuarine environments.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

With coastal management funding, the Virginia Coastal Program and the Chesapeake Bay-VA Reserve acquired a 120-acre site along the Dragon Run, part of the most pristine coastal watershed in Virginia, that will be preserved for conservation and research within a new state reserve system. The coastal program is also supporting the development of a new special area management plan that would bring together the four counties in the Dragon Run watershed, as well as federal and state agencies, including the reserve and interested stakeholders. The special area management plan will help ensure more consistency among resource management, protection and development interests and should help maintain and enhance the resources of areas. The reserve is also a key participant in the Shallow Water Monitoring Project for the Chesapeake Bay Program. Goals of this project include data collection and assessment of shallow water quality criteria, increased understanding of processes influencing water quality in the shallows, and refinement of our knowledge regarding submersed aquatic vegetation habitat conditions.